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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KISL](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: FADHILA AND THE REGIONS LAW: DRINKING FROM THEIR
OWN SOUP BOWL

REF: BAGHDAD 000872

Classified By: PolCouns Matt Tueller for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

C) In a meeting on March 25, 2008 at the Council of Representatives (COR), Fadhila Bloc member Dr. Basim al-Hechaimi gave a detailed overview of his party's strategy for the eventual creation of a Basrah federal region. When the Regions Law goes into effect next month, Fadhila expects ISCI to make the first move in attempting to transform one or more of the 9 predominantly Shia provinces of southern Iraq into a region. In several provinces, ISCI could easily muster the necessary 1/3 of the members of the provincial council to submit an application to the central government. However, the Fadhila bloc believes that if this matter is sent to the Iraqi High Electoral Commission (IHEC) for review, IHEC will remand it to the Supreme Judicial Council. If this happens, Fadhila believes ISCI's initiative will be declared unconstitutional, since the recently passed Provincial Powers Law calls for new provincial council elections by October 1. Therefore, any attempt by the currently sitting provincial councils to declare a new federal region would be declared null and void by the judicial system, which would effectively end ISCI's attempt to create what Dr. Basim coined a "Greater Southern Republic of Hakim." Stating that "Iraqis may eat from a communal table, but they drink from their own soup bowl, as they would rather spill their soup on their own shirts than on their neighbors," Dr. Basim aptly summarized Fadhila's unwillingness to use Basrah's oil wealth to subsidize the other southern provinces in a nine province ISCI-dominated 'super' region. He hinted that in the aftermath of provincial elections, Fadhila would be well-positioned to declare Basrah a federal region.

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